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OPEDA'S Popular Luncheon Programs



Speaker's Table, October 20, 1951

In August, 1949, OPEDA's members in the Washington area were canvassed for their views on the types of local meetings which they believed would be most widely popular and most largely attended—evening meetings, social affairs, dinner meetings, luncheon programs. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the last. Following the dictum of the majority and beginning in October, 1949, these programs have been held regularly each month, October to June, through to the twenty-second of the series in the current month.

Illustrative of the programs at these luncheon meetings, usually including a period for comments and questions, the following may be cited briefly here, even though some of them have from time to time been referred to in the newsletters:

At the November (1949) meeting, OPEDA's future course with respect to retirement credit for previous service under *Federal-State cooperative programs* was discussed by B. Ralph Stauber (BAE), and the following month T. Roy Reid (Pers) offered "Some random comments on the *USDA professional employee*."

Surveys of legislative prospects have been presented frequently at these luncheons as well as in the newsletters, and more recently have included the personal appearance of two of the local federal employee columnists, Jerry Kluttz and Joseph Young. Among other things, the latter stressed the point that government employees never hesitate to ask favors of the Congress, but somehow usually forget to say "thank you" when their desires are fulfilled. His

final comment: "I have heard various members of Congress say, 'It is sometimes discouraging to us that federal employees don't seem to appreciate what we have done to help them.'"

Further programs have included a mock radio forum, with all the trimmings of tape recording and an emcee, on the question, "Should the U. S. Department of Agriculture finance the *education of its professional employees*?" (Feb. 1950); a panel discussion of the *relationships of the Department with its field agencies* (Oct. 1950); and a panel presentation on *public service standards and conduct* (Dec. 1950).

Conserving and utilizing *scientific and professional manpower* during an emergency was the subject of a detailed analysis by F. B. Fracker (ARA), centering around the problem presented, manpower boards and committees, and the current status of the objectives and their implementation (Feb. 1951).

In his address at the April (1951) luncheon, Civil Service Commissioner Ramspeck briefly summarized the legislative situation and some of the problems of the Commission, and expressed his great interest in improving the management side of government and his deep concern about the point of view of the general public toward people who work for government. With respect to the last, Mr. Ramspeck has been conducting a very active and widespread "truth campaign" to combat the unfavorable and unjust comments—especially by a certain type of newspaper and magazine writers—about federal employees of the classified service who in the vast majority

take their work seriously and carry out their assignments and daily tasks faithfully.

In a letter of December 12, Commissioner Ramspeck states: "*Your letter of November 27 has been received, and I appreciate very much your generous comments regarding my efforts to combat false impressions regarding federal employees—With best wishes, I am, sincerely yours.*"

Assistant Secretary Knox T. Hutchinson, speaking at the May (1951) luncheon on "*Organization for effective agricultural programs*," commented favorably on OPEDA's objectives and code of ethics and stressed the point that in government employment as elsewhere the end product is the service rendered to the public co-operatively by administration and the individual worker alike.

Through a statement from his office at that time, OPEDA was requested to report back to him on what our organization believes are the conditions of work that would be most conducive to professional people in doing their work more effectively. This was referred to the Committee on Working Criteria, which is making an exhaustive study of the question and will submit a full report early in the new year.

At the May meeting of the Council, President Stauber announced that many of our members working at the Beltsville Research Centers find it rather difficult to get in to the regular luncheon programs in downtown Washington. Since approximately one-sixth of OPEDA's members in the D. C. area are stationed there, it was readily agreed that one of the fall meetings should be scheduled for

Beltsville. Accordingly, the November 20 (1951) luncheon was held at the Plant Industry Station, with Dr. Bennett T. Simms, Chief, Bureau of Animal Industry, as the speaker. His subject:

Meat for the Masses

"History tells us," said Dr. Simms in part, "that meat and meat animals are among the most important things insofar as our material welfare is concerned . . . So we make no apologies when we discuss 'meat for the masses' before any American audience. The world as a whole is meat-hungry—only a few favored nations have enough meat to eat." Statistics show, he said, that we in America have somewhat less meat on our tables than our forefathers had. Fifty years ago we were exporting meat. Our population has increased faster than our production and some will tell us that we may be approaching a limit beyond which even special efforts will bring only a small increase in the meat we can produce.

The Broiler Story

"One story I like to tell," Dr. Simms said, "concerns what research has done for the broiler industry; it reads like a fairy story." It was not until 1934 that America raised enough broilers for statistical report by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. At that time there was 1 pound for each person in the country at 4 times the price of beef. Since then we have increased the production 20-fold

and last year broilers sold for only 1½ times the price of beef. Moreover, the improvements in raising turkeys present a similar picture.

Unplowed Acres

This all leads up to the very natural question, "What we did for poultry, can't we do for other meat animals?" The equally natural reply is that we can't produce livestock unless we feed them. We can't import the extra feed and meat we need from anywhere else in the world; we will have to produce them ourselves. "I am struck," he said, "by the fact that in general we are just beginning intensive consideration and research on the many millions of acres we have that are *unplowed acres*. It is our *plowed acres* that have occupied the forefront of research in the past . . . I believe the greatest advance in the future must lie in producing more feed from our pastures and ranges." Our plant research in the past has been focused largely on breeding better varieties for our plowed acres; we need now to pay more attention to the development of improved varieties for the pastures and ranges, as well as of better methods of fertilization and management.

Better and Healthier Animals

It is one of the primary functions in livestock research to produce more milk, meat and eggs with the feed that is available. To do this we must have improved breeding lines and healthier animals for better utilization of the feed that we have. Moreover,

disease investigations in the past have been aimed largely at those diseases which actually destroy the animals. The time has come when we must not overlook exposure of our animals even to minor or inapparent infections and parasites, which have now been shown to reduce the weight and price per pound paid at slaughter time. The breeding of livestock lines entirely free from infections and parasites is one of the most important steps for the future.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Dr. Simms continued, "We know the progress that has been made in the last 50 years, but what about the next 50? It will be tougher to produce enough meat for our people 50 years from now than it is today. But during that time we will have learned how to handle these jobs better than we do today. We will continue to make progress in disease control, in breeding for higher production, and in better management. We will learn how to make better pastures and more productive cultivated acres. I am an optimist. I think our people in the United States will continue to be a well-fed people. And this is very important. Someone once said that when hunger and malnutrition sit at the dinner table, revolution knocks at the door. A large factor in maintaining a stable government in our country is to have a well-fed population. I believe we *can* have a population that is well fed, with plenty of meat in the lamb stew and a chicken in every pot."

Consideration of Public Service Criteria

The Committee on Public Service Criteria recognizes that it is a difficult task to formulate a statement of criteria that consists of something more than pious promises to the public or that is not so vague as to have little meaning in terms of day by day professional work. The Committee's concept of criteria is that they should motivate those who accept them. Criteria which motivate professional government employees to dedicate their talents to public service with the same zest and unstinted energies which begets high scientific accomplishments will, to use Mr. Kneipp's terms, transmute ideals into principles of behavior.

Criteria for Public Service must, however, express standards for both physical and administrative conditions under which professional employees work, as well as express standards for personal behavior. The criteria must be a synthesis of a statement of the needs which cause government to employ professionals and a statement of the standards set by professional groups themselves to measure the adequacy of professional accomplishment. To the extent that opportunities to render the professional services to which one has dedicated his life, are provided by government employment, there will be accomplished a synthesis of the standards which measure professional attainment and the standards which measure public service.

The Committee believes that only if professional employees can maintain

high standards of integrity in both professional accomplishment and public service, will they be satisfied with their public professional status. Only under these conditions will they be motivated in their professions in the public service with the highest zest for maximum accomplishment. In the light of these assumptions the Committee on Public Service Criteria has drawn upon other analyses than its own to learn if possible under what conditions professional employees are motivated to their highest possible endeavor in the public service. This short report is a synthesis of the limited findings of the Committee and other studies of this same area of concern.

A study of "Attitudes of Scientists and Engineers About Their Government Employment" was made by the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University in 1950. "The Scientist As a Government Employee" is a study made by the Interdepartmental Advisory Committee on Scientific Personnel for the President's Scientific Research Board in 1947. Not all professional government employees are scientists and engineers but the committee knows of no equally objective and analytical studies of other professionals, who are or have been employed in government services. Articles such as the one by Robert Moses in a November 1951 New York Times Magazine, "Government Can't Be Just Like Business," have, however, dealt with these and

even broader issues germane to professional public service.

The Committee on Public Service Criteria has not converted its findings into neatly stated criteria. It, however, submits the following summary statements of its deliberations for consideration of, and it hopes for an open discussion of them by, the members of OPEDA.

The members of OPEDA having accepted government employment, are public servants. They should be guided and motivated by public service objectives or criteria. They are not clerks or custodial employees but professional persons and must render service to the public by the practice of the professions to which they have dedicated their lives and talents. Each of these professions is guided and motivated by standards of professional competence and ethics. Opportunities to practice these standards should be guaranteed by the government employing agency. Efficient, cooperative, courteous service should be rendered by all professional employees. Criteria for Public Service should be so stated as to assist both professional employees and employing agencies to guarantee maximum public service through professional accomplishment.

The situation that has existed during the past 15 or 20 years, due to launching of many new programs and the great increase in personnel, has been conducive to attitudes that lack the zest for public service that used to be so characteristic of Department

of Agriculture professional workers. It has, also, at times and in some situations, tended to substitute administrative procedures for the professional standards of highly trained employees. The fundamental problem studied by the OPEDA Committee on Public Service Criteria has therefore been the conflict between professional standards and goals and the realities of government administration, and the methods of resolving this conflict in the interest of public service. The Committee has worked both as a whole and through three subcommittees. The division of labor among the subcommittees was (1) serving the public in personal relations, (2) serving the public through efficient organizations and administration, and (3) serving the public through competent professional accomplishments. The Committee's nearest approach to the statement of criteria is the following:

The professional employee most effectively serves the public,

- a) when he is motivated and

guided by the highest standards of his chosen profession,

- b) when he recognizes public needs in developing the plans and programs which will efficiently utilize his time and talents,
- c) when he makes effective and economic use of all personnel, equipment and supplies placed at his command by the government,
- d) when he practices team work and helps to develop esprit de corps in the organization of which he is a part,
- e) when he subordinates his personal abilities to his professional and administrative duties and obligations, and
- f) when he is efficient, impartial, and courteous to all citizens who seek his assistance.

An employing agency serves the public through its professional employees most effectively,

- a) when its policies are always

made clear to professional persons working at all administrative levels,

- b) when it so organizes its activities as to reduce to a minimum conflicts and misunderstandings in jurisdictional responsibilities,
- c) when it promptly adopts and widely applies all practicable economics in administration,
- d) when it removes all possible obstacles to the practice by professional workers of the highest professional standards,
- e) when it maintains all possible safeguards against undue diversion of the time of professional personnel to non-professional activities, and
- f) when by in-service training programs it contributes to both administrative efficiency and professional improvement. — *Carl C. Taylor, Chairman.*

OPEDA's Committee on Membership

The Membership Drive

Progress has been made in our drive for a larger membership, about which you have read in the September newsletter. For real success, however, we all need to get out and push as individuals. We are satisfied that there are few present members of OPEDA who could not bring in a new member within a few hours of their receipt of this letter. Many—particularly those recently entering the Department—have never heard of our organization. Many others have never been directly approached on the subject. Doubtless there are some who have held back in the belief that an invitation or "bid" is essential. We base these beliefs on the ease with which new members have been enrolled by those who have made the effort. It's a little bit like

offering a smoke or a helping hand to someone who wouldn't think of asking for it. With the customary exceptions, it's just about that simple.

The one greatest need of OPEDA for larger usefulness is the substantial increase in membership for which we are working, and we believe that the best single method by which this objective can be attained is that of effort by all individual members. Can we do it? We think we can.

Local or Regional Groups

Another promising avenue is through the organization of chapters in the field office centers. Under OPEDA's constitution, 12 or more members can form a chapter. If, for some reason, the formation of a chapter is not feasible, a group of mem-

bers can become associated informally, with as little or as much group activity as they may desire. With either type of group, through the officers of the chapter or through a spokesman for the group, it would be possible for the official group of the organization in Washington to keep in closer and more current touch with the field membership. This, as well as other potential advantages, we believe should make membership more attractive to those in the field who are unable to participate in our council and luncheon meetings here in Washington. Dr. Rand will be happy to write in greater detail to any members in the field to whom the chapter or the informal-group idea appeals.

Whatever we do, let's get it done!—*F. D. Van Zant, Chairman.*

Report of the Executive Officer

General Statement

The usual practice at the January meeting of OPEDA's Council has been to establish the general background of policy toward which our organization is to work during the ensuing year. Before the officers can speak and act authoritatively for our membership they must have some declaration of policy by the Council as to the general viewpoints and on the specific activities of the Executive Officer and the Standing Committees for the year.

Pursuant to this policy, the Council directed the Executive Officer to present to the Congress OPEDA's stands for the classified service on a general pay increase, overtime pay, annual and sick leave, retirement credit for previous service under Federal-State cooperative programs, and on multiple taxation of individual incomes. Various other matters, including severance pay, disability allowances, the 48-hour week, and annuities under the classified service vs. social security,

were referred to the appropriate standing committees for further study and action.

Legislation

Senate hearings before which OPEDA's statements have been presented include those on general pay increases, annual and sick leave, general annuity increases, credit for service under Federal-State cooperative programs, and on overtime pay. All but the last have been published in the newsletters. The only hearings in the House were on increases in pay for the classified service.

Pay increases: The stand of the Administration, the Civil Service Commission, and the Senate Committee was for a percentage increase across the board; that of the House Committee, for a flat \$400 increase for all. The final compromise in conference was for the percentage increase, with a floor of \$300 and a ceiling of \$800. As you all are now aware, the com-

promise bill was passed, retroactive to the first pay period of July, 1951. The record vote in the House was 317 yeas and 26 nays, with 85 not voting. The Senate was unanimous for the bill by a voice vote. Pursuant to direction by the Council, the Executive Officer wrote letters of appreciation from OPEDA for the recent legislation on pay increases and leave benefits. The replies are as follows:

In a letter dated November 28, addressed to the Executive Officer, Senator Olin D. Johnson, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, states: "I appreciate your kind expression of thanks in regard to the recent salary increase and leave benefits for Federal employees. I consider this increase to be well deserved by our Federal workers."

A letter dated December 3 from Senator John O. Pastore, Chairman of the Subcommittee, says: "I have your letter of November 27, written

on behalf of the Organization of Professional Employees, U. S. Department of Agriculture, thanking me for my efforts in the passage of legislation to provide for a pay increase for Government employees. I assure you that I was glad to be able to take an active part in the passage of this legislation as I know it was much deserved and long overdue. Thank you for writing me and please extend my regards to the members of your organization."

In a letter of December 11, Representative Tom Murray, Chairman of the House Committee, says: "Thank you for your letter of December 11 expressing the appreciation of the Organization of Professional Employees, U. S. Department of Agriculture, for the legislation recently enacted providing for salary increases and leave benefits for Federal employees. May I take this opportunity to wish you and your membership a very pleasant holiday season."

Annual and Sick Leave: Under the provisions of the "Annual and Sick Leave Act of 1951," the new graduated annual leave plan becomes effective on January 6, 1952. Insofar as employees of our Department are concerned, this provides for 13 days of annual leave to employees with less than 3 years of service, 20 days for those with 3 but less than 15 years, and 26 days for those with 15 or more years of service. The law also provides that annual leave not used "shall be accumulated for use in succeeding years until it totals not to exceed 60 days at the end of the last complete biweekly pay period" or its equivalent.

The law stipulates further that the sick leave which is not used by an officer or employee during the year in which it accrues "shall accumulate and be available for use in succeeding years."

By way of background, the Douglas amendment to the Supplemental Appropriations Bill, effective November 1, 1951, reduced annual leave to 20 days beginning with the current calendar year. The Postal Rate Increase Law, Title II of which contains the rider cited as "Annual and Sick Leave Act of 1951," abrogates the Douglas amendment and restores the 26 days of annual leave for the calendar year 1951 and enacts into the law the Senate-House compromise on annual and sick leave, effective January 6, 1952, as noted above.

The fact that returns from OPEDA's questionnaire on leave (newsletter of March, 1951) indicated

the belief of more than 22 percent that 26 days of annual leave is too much appears to be significant. Moreover, a high proportion of those favoring the 26-day limit showed very considerable accumulations of annual leave to their credit. In view of these returns, together with the serious emergency situation which our country now faces, the currently passed legislation on leave would appear to be reasonably fair and equitable both to the government and to its employees.

Briefs

▼ "Freedom of thought, of action, of expression is essential to research wherever it be done—in universities or in industry. Freedom to reap the harvest of one's accomplishments is equally essential if basic knowledge is to be converted into goods and services for the benefit of mankind. Here, in this country, American research has prospered by preserving freedom of initiative for the individual, and by offering suitable incentives to commercial accomplishment."—(By permission of Crawford H. Greenwalt.)

▼ Please notify OPEDA promptly of changes in address.

▼ Payment of dues for 1952 is now in order.

▼ You are hereby appointed a "One-Man Committee on New Members"—a whole year for the price of one dinner!

▼ Your Government Needs Your Money—BUY BONDS!

Holdover Bills: Many other bills that would affect Federal employees were introduced, though not passed, by the first session of the 82d Congress. This by no means indicates that they are all dead. Any or all of them will still be open for action by the second session, which convenes in January. All further legislative matters authorized by the Council will be followed through as opportunity offers.

As to increased annuities to retired Federal employees, Senator Johnston's recent letter to your Executive Officer states: "You may be assured that retirement matters will be first on the agenda when Congress reconvenes in January."

In the past, Commissioner Ramspeck has been against further increases on the basis that they would dip seriously into the present accrued civil service retirement funds. This

doubtless had an important bearing on the sidetracking of the measure during the first session. Partially reversing his previous stand, Mr. Ramspeck has subsequently indicated that he will now support similar legislation, provided that Congress votes the necessary additional funds.

With respect to *Retirement Credit for Previous Service under Federal-State Cooperative Programs*, adverse reports during the current year have been made by the Bureau of the Budget, the General Accounting Office, and by Commissioner Ramspeck. Nevertheless, OPEDA has presented its detailed stand at Senate hearings and to the appropriate committees of both the House and Senate, as well as through informal committees of our organization in separate personal conferences with the three Civil Service Commissioners and their legal advisers.

Commissioner Ramspeck's main conclusion in a letter to the Chairman of the House Committee is that "In order to be considered a Federal employee, a person must be: (1) Engaged in the performance of Federal functions under authority of an act of Congress or an Executive Order; (2) appointed or employed by a Federal officer; or (3) under the supervision and direction of a Federal officer." We consider that at least the third proviso has been met by the groups included in S. 1019 and H.R. 2868.

OPEDA has been working almost continuously on this legislation since 1947 and has now done about all it can except to keep at it. We have been informed through congressional sources that Mr. Ramspeck has now agreed to reconsider the 1951 bills, but that if they are to come up for further action by the second session the big impetus must come from those interested in this legislation. This is where the matter at present stands.

OPEDA's Membership

Representation on the Council for a succeeding year is based on the number of paid-up members in each major unit of the Department as of October 1 of each current year. The actual number of members for a year, however, includes the October 1 count plus those joining between October 2 and December 31. Thus the total for 1950, and carried over into 1951, was 2,925, the number given at congressional hearings. On this basis, the actual number of members as of December 31, 1951, is 2,602.—Frederick V. Rand, Executive Officer.

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